



CPE REPORT

Eastern Kentucky University News for the Council on Postsecondary Education



EKU Scholar House

SCHOLAR HOUSE WILL HELP SINGLE PARENTS SUCCEED

A new Scholar House, expected to open on the ECU campus in the summer of 2017, will offer a “transformative” experience for single parents pursuing a college education.

Dr. David McFaddin, executive director of ECU's Office of Engagement and Regional Stewardship, explained that the planned facility will provide a “one-stop shop” of services. In addition to the 36 two-bedroom apartments, residents will also enjoy an on-site, certified child development facility for up to 80 children; receive counseling; participate in life skills workshops; and be near all the services and amenities of the Richmond campus, such as Student Health Services and the Women's Health Clinic. Most services are free; the cost of housing and childcare will be income-based.

The House “takes a lot of stress off, so the students can focus on their studies,” McFaddin said. “As a school of opportunity, there's no better way for us to help single parents become productive and break the glass ceiling.”

The Scholar House is the product of a partnership between the Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC), Kentucky River Foothills Development Council Inc. (KRFDC), the City of Richmond and ECU.

The \$9.5 million project is primarily funded by KHC – the City of Richmond received a \$1 million Community Development Block Grant for construction costs – and will be managed by Kentucky River Foothills, which also secured several deferred loans to go toward project development costs. Eastern provided the land via a long-term lease.

Single parents are given first priority to reside in the Scholar House. Residents must be at least 18, be eligible for a Housing Choice voucher, and be full-time students at any degree-granting or specialty institution of higher learning.

Pending legislative approval, construction on the House is expected to begin this summer.

TRAILBLAZER SCHOLARSHIP AIDS FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

A new Trailblazer Scholarship at ECU will assist students seeking to be the first in their families to earn a college degree.

Last fall, more than 800 new freshmen entering ECU were first-generation students.

“Serving this population of students has been at the heart of Eastern's mission for over a century,” said Dr. Brett Morris, executive director for enrollment management at ECU. “This scholarship will help fulfill unmet needs many first-generation families experience when attempting to find affordable, quality college options for their children.”

According to a report from the Pell Institute entitled “What Works for First-Generation Students,” many first-generation students find the amount of aid awarded is often insufficient to offset the rising costs of college attendance. Tuition increases, stagnant grant aid, and the high costs of textbooks and transportation make it a struggle to pay for college. Also, many first-generation students choose to work rather than to take out student loans, making it difficult for them to focus time and attention on their coursework.

GIVING INCREASES MORE THAN 50%

The ECU Development Office reports that giving for the first six months of the current fiscal year easily surpassed totals for the same period last year.

The approximately \$3.2 million raised from July through December 2015 was the third-best six-month figure in University history and \$1.2 million ahead of last year's pace.

Eastern is coming off its best fundraising year since 2001.



The winning Campus Challenge team is pictured with judges. From left: Jeff Fultz, Mendi Goble, Anthony Lamanna, Craig Turner, Scott Arias, Kara Purdy and ECU President Michael Benson. (Photo by Zeynab Day).

WINNING CAMPUS CHALLENGE ENTRY FOCUSES ON PUBLIC SERVICE

A proposal to involve all Eastern Kentucky University students in public service has captured the top prize in the University's first Campus Challenge competition.

"Race to the Next Greatest Generation: Making ECU a Force for Good," developed by four construction management faculty members, includes two components: a public service exchange where providers such as Habitat for Humanity and Salvation Army post opportunities for assistance, and an academic requirement that each ECU full-time undergraduate student contribute one hour a week throughout the school year in service.

"This idea has so much potential," said ECU President Michael Benson in announcing the winner. "It distinguishes us as the service university that makes a difference."

According to the team, ECU would be the first public university in Kentucky, and one of just a few nationwide, to adopt such a requirement.

"This idea has so much potential. It distinguishes us as the service university that makes a difference."

ECU President Michael Benson

Box in 2013 that encouraged faculty and staff to offer ideas for improvements. Last year, it was decided to model the competition after the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Mayors Challenge. Thirty-three entries were submitted and then narrowed to five.

The timeline for implementing "Race to the Next Greatest Generation" is uncertain.

Before announcing the winning team, Benson said ECU Board of Regents Chair Craig Turner was donating \$5,000 to each of what the president called "four second-place winners."

The winning team received \$10,000 from the University to begin implementing its plan, which requires \$50,000 in start-up costs. The payoff would be approximately 300,000 volunteer hours contributed each year by Eastern students.

The Campus Challenge stemmed from a President's Suggestion

EKU SURPASSES BENCHMARKS ON NSSE

ECU exceeds similar benchmark institutions and other comparison groups on measures of student engagement, especially in the areas of academic challenge and experiences with faculty.

According to the 2015 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the University's freshmen and seniors alike rated ECU "significantly better" than all its benchmarks and the national average on all academic challenge indicators (higher-order learning, reflective and integrative learning, learning strategies and quantitative reasoning) as well as measures related to experiences with faculty (student-faculty interaction and effective teaching practices).

ECU also fared well in the campus environment category. First-year students and seniors rated Eastern ahead of its benchmarks and the national average in quality of interactions and supportive environment.

In almost every NSSE category, Eastern showed steady improvement over the past three years.

The survey also showed that the percentage of ECU first-year students and seniors who rated their experience as "excellent" or "good" and who said they would "definitely" or "probably" choose to attend the institution again exceeded the average for benchmarks, southeast public institutions and the nation. In each case, 86 to 87 percent of the first-year students and seniors responded affirmatively.

DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP BOOSTS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

A new partnership between ECU and Madison County Schools "will set this community apart from the rest of the Commonwealth."

That's how Madison County Schools Superintendent Elmer Thomas described a doctoral fellowship that will allow one MCS administrator or teacher a year to pursue, with all tuition and fees paid by the University, an Ed.D. degree in educational leadership and policy studies on the Richmond campus.

Thomas has another reason to be excited. ECU tabbed the superintendent to be the program's first Fellow. Then, each subsequent year, the school system will select one administrator or teacher to participate.

"The fellowship will allow for a continual flow of MCS employees to have the opportunity to grow, learn, develop and expand their ability in teaching and learning in a way that has never been approached before," Thomas said.